

Community Service News

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CONTENTS

NOTES TO THE EDITOR.....	98
MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES.....	98
BIRTH RATES, MIGRATION, AND COMMUNITY SURVIVAL	
THE SURASHTRAS OF MADURA: A SELF-SUSTAINING CITY POPULATION, by Arthur E. Morgan.....	99
REVIEWS	
<i>Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility</i> , by Clyde V. Kiser and P. K. Whelpton.....	106
<i>Differential Birthrates in Michigan</i> , by J. Allan Beegle.....	109
<i>Migration and Education</i> , by Edmund de S. Brunner, Frank Lorimer, and Floyd Dotson.....	110
PECKHAM AND THE ROYAL COMMISSION.....	112
REGIONAL ECONOMIC STABILITY.....	114
COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SURVIVAL: REPORT OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON THE SMALL COMMUNITY	
Community Disintegration.....	119
The Endowed College and Community.....	120
Community and the Welfare State.....	120
Laymen in the Community.....	121
Regional Community Organizations.....	122
National Community Service Organization.....	124
Economic Basis for Community.....	125
Religion in the Small Community.....	126
COOPERATIVE COMMUNITIES	
Hidden Springs.....	128

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

We find your column on cooperative communities most interesting and hope you continue it as a means of contact and information from one community to another. It could prove to be a vital link.—Rachel Wood, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Enclosed is my check for a two years' extension of my subscription to one of the most rewarding periodicals in its field: *Community Service News*.—James Dahir, New York

[Mr. Dahir is author of the book *The Neighborhood Unit Plan*, and of *How to Develop Your Community*, soon to be published by Harpers.]

Unless we can look forward to community control of public education, which will involve service for autonomous groups, we might as well write off public education as an institution supporting democracy. At present it is a vast bureaucratic organization with authoritarian attitudes which gives only lip service to democracy.—Maria Rogers, Secretary, Committee for Autonomous Groups, New York

I just wanted to thank you for the splendid job you have been doing through the *Community Service News*. I have read the recent issue with interest and deep appreciation. You are doing a most useful service in drawing such relevant matters to the attention of the people.—I. W. Moomaw, Educational Secretary, Agricultural Missions, Inc., New York

I am very much interested in community building. It seems to me that the various freedoms can be secured only by a country-wide adoption of the ideas you advance.—Henry N. Hulander, Los Angeles

Comments on the community conference:

At the beginning of the meetings I was somewhat bewildered, chiefly because of the heterogeneity of the group. But the meetings developed into one of the most memorable experiences of my life; and I'm sure that some of the procedures that puzzled me at the time contributed toward that end. You have a general "pattern" that certainly works, and I don't feel qualified to take issue with any part of the pattern.—Harold C. Taylor, Kalamazoo, Michigan

A few days with such groups as are attracted by the conference are real morale builders.—Mr. and Mrs. James Steer, North Lima, Ohio

We came to learn what is being done in the way of promoting community development and to meet some of those who were doing it, both of which objectives the conference met. I am not sure that the problems presented at the beginning were kept very specifically in mind as the conference progressed.—Charles and Wanda Jackson, Kalamazoo, Michigan

MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

Sept. 14-17. Fourth Annual Institute of Community Leadership, Cazenovia, New York, sponsored by New York State Citizens Council. Apply to Dorothy J. Mial, Institute Director, 601 E. Genesee St., Syracuse 2, N.Y.

Oct. 13-16. Rural Youth Conference, Jackson's Mill, W. Va. Apply to A. Delight Bobilya, R.R. 2, Monroeville, Ind.

Oct. 24-27. Annual Conference, Dept. of Adult Education, Natl. Education Assn., Cleveland, O. Apply to the Department, at 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

Nov. 3-5. Third Natl. Conference on Intergroup Relations, Shoreland Hotel, Chicago. Apply to Am. Council on Race Relations, 4901 Ellis Ave., Chicago 15.

The Surashtras of Madura: A Self-Sustaining City Population

The Surashtras of India stand so much alone of all city dwellers in their history of maintaining their population by their own birth rate that it seems wise to publish here in full the detailed report which Arthur Morgan obtained from a Surashtra elder. In reading this report it should be borne in mind that the Surashtras were in reality a rural people isolated by their conservative culture within an urban environment. Today as that isolation is breaking down the Surashtras are ceasing to maintain their rural culture and are increasingly subject to social disintegration and race suicide.

by ARTHUR E. MORGAN

For years I have been searching for a city population which maintained itself by its own birth rate. Among the groups which were on my list to explore were the Surashtra people of Madura in South India. With small expectation of ever visiting South India, I searched the available literature, but with only meager results. When occasion unexpectedly came to visit Madura I took the opportunity to make inquiry.

Most of the following information came from L. K. Tulasiraram, B.A., B.L., an advocate of Madura, and one of the elders and patriarchs of the Surashtras. He was born in 1870. His father was born in 1828 and died in February 1904. My informant has twice been in England. In 1919 he gave evidence before Parliament on the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. His mind is clear and his memory sharp.

Since this is the first clear-cut case I have found of a distinctly urban group which has survived and increased in numbers through centuries in a definitely urban environment, it seems worth while to record quite fully the historical background, social organization, and conditions of living of these people. Since Surashtras are a distinct group, surrounded by people of different speech and traditions, and since they almost never intermarry with other groups, they provide a clearly defined case. They live in a densely settled part of Madura, where the population must be 200 to 600 persons per acre. Some of the more prosperous have moved to a suburban area, and a few of the more wealthy have built palatial homes in other parts of the city.

The main body of the Surashtra people is located in Central India, in adjoining parts of three provinces. There is an active movement at present to unite these into a distinct Surashtra province, which would constitute one of the divisions of the Indian government—like an American state.

The Surashtras who finally settled in Madura, in South India, separated from the main body in the year 1024 A.D., during the siege of Somnath by Mohamed of Ghazni. It is not known how many were included in that migration.

The first stop was at Vizianagarum, then one of the largest cities of India. The Surashtra group settled, not in the city proper, but in surrounding villages, ten or twelve miles from the city. Details of their ways of living are not known, but part of them were engaged in rituals for their own and other people.

In 1565, at the time of the battle of Talikota, they moved southward to the Andhra country, in Godivari District (Rajamundry) and in nearby places. It is thought that they lived there only in villages. They left this region in the time of Maharajah Sarbhoj, about 1600 A.D. In the Andhra country they had learned silk weaving. They went from there to Tanjore, about 150 miles south of Madras. The Maharaja of Tanjore wanted silk weavers and invited them. They lived from four to five miles from the palace in small "chavadi," which were small hamlets and places where justice was dispensed. There about half of the Surashtra population of 10,000 or 15,000 were engaged in silk weaving.

The weavers needed large open spaces for stretching their works, which were usually about 36 yards long, but sometimes were 100 yards long. To find such open spaces they spread to the neighboring towns of Salem, Trichinopoly and Kumbakonam, and lived in the margins of these towns, which had populations of 25,000 to 30,000. Some stayed there permanently, while others began to move in search of better economic conditions.

About 1623 they were invited to come to Madura by Tarumalai Naick, Viceroy of the King of Vizianagarum. They came slowly during the period from 1623 to 1630. The Viceroy prescribed that they should live within half a mile of the palace, which resulted in considerable congestion of residence. They have lived there ever since, near and around the old palace. Among their houses are palace outbuildings and the elephant lane, consisting of ten pillars 80 to 100 feet high and five feet in diameter, where the King's elephants were hitched. About 35,000 Surashtras gathered in this limited area. Thereafter there were no additions of Surashtras to the population of the city of Madura from the north, and those in Madura, a self-contained community, increased in the natural course. In the census of 1941 the Madura Surashtras numbered 51,000. The whole of the Surashtra population lived in the thickly populated city of Madura, and there were not many who lived in the adjacent villages of the city. Some thirty years ago the Surashtras formed nearly 40 per cent of the population of the city. Now (1949), after the advent of evacuees from Burma and refugees from other parts of India, they form about 12 to 15 per cent of the population of the

city. The Surashtras are not emigrating in large numbers, but stick on as a community in Madura. In the entire Madras presidency, the province in which Madura is located, there were about 100,000 in 1941. Those at Dindegul and Trichinopoly have been there since about 1600.

The Surashtras have always been noted among their neighbors for being prolific. Those who survived their infancy tended to live long. Surviving to 80 years was a full life, with a limit of about 85. At the time of the 1941 census the average size of a Surashtra family in Madura was six.

As congestion increased around the palace they spread out. They got special legal permission to spread their warps around the margins of the roads. Formerly nearly all the Surashtras in Madura were weavers. Then they took up dyeing and developed the industry of dyeing in addition to weaving. Then they made gold thread. However, they usually got gold thread from the Muslims and processed it. Another of their arts was making bandanas by junnadi cloth dyeing. The worker covers a piece of cloth with very fine knots the size of a pinhead, and then dyes the cloth.

The gold thread industry was killed by the introduction of an electrolytic process of coating thread with gold. This process was introduced by two Frenchmen, Paul and Duval. The gold thread industry survived in Madura until 1920. It is now continued in Surat. All the other industries— weaving, dyeing, and junnadi work—still continue.

Among diseases, cholera was formerly serious, but there have been no cases for fifteen years. Typhoid still exists, and tuberculosis is rampant. In one suburb inhabited by Surashtras and others, 65 per cent of the population was found to be tubercular. In recent times a form of paralysis is becoming common.

Some standards conduced to good health, while others resulted in high infant death rates. The idea of bacterial infection did not exist. A midwife in delivering a child would rub her hands on the dirt floor to get friction for holding the baby in delivery. Puerperal fever was common.

Formerly the Surashtras were total abstainers from alcohol. In 1890 there were only 5 out of 50,000 who drank. By 1920 about 20 to 25 per cent were drinking. During the period between 1890 and 1920 the standard of living improved. Money came easily into the hands of the weavers. German dye-stuffs used in the dyeing factory contributed to the wealth of the community, and this inflation of currency contributed to increase drinking in the community. Women began to wear gold necklaces and other jewelry, and began to use saris of delicate and fine texture, while men became more civilized and adopted fine dress. Old ways of community cooperation are fast dying out.

The Surashtras are known as heavy eaters in South India, and eat 15 per

cent more than any other community (religious group); 90 per cent are vegetarians.

The Surashtras are shy people. The women do not get about much. They speak the regional language, Tamil, badly, and in their relations with others are "like a drop of water on a lotus leaf." They are clannish people, with a strong "esprit de corps." Usually matches were arranged nearby. Custom required that for a period before marriage the groom must visit the bride's home three times a day, and must be sent for each time, so proximity was convenient. They liked celebrations and never missed sharing in a holiday, whether it was Hindu, Christian, Jain or Muslim. The Surashtras are Brahmans, and a most strict sect of the Brahmans.

Standards of living were modest and moderate, and ostentation of wealth was bad form. A man would make his wife a wedding gift worth seven or eight rupees (a rupee equals about 30 cents). Now times are changed and the bride expects a gift of hundreds of rupees.

Since 1650 they have practiced child marriage. A Muslim would not molest a married woman, and so child marriage was a form of protection. Their widows did not marry. The Surashtras were strict in sex morality, and sex offenses were rare among men and women. Any woman offending was sent away. The father would say that she had died.

Nearly all Surashtra men practiced regular physical exercise—"kshvarath," Hindu for exercise. In a dark cellar room the men would exercise as in rowing a boat. Boys would begin regular exercise at about 16, when they were strong enough for underground "kshvarath." There were also about 40 gymnasiums in the colony, and exercise was universal. The women did much physical work, stretching work, lifting and carrying water, cleaning, sweeping, cooking, etc. They were physically hard-working and tough. Delivery as a rule was short and easy, lasting perhaps ten minutes, and was looked on as a minor inconvenience. The members of the family did their own housework, and did not use servants. In some wealthy Surashtra families where the women have servants and do not do physical labor, childbirth is becoming a serious matter. The habits of physical exercise and physical work are not now being kept up except in schools and colleges.

When a young man was being considered as to his eligibility for marriage, questions asked concerning him would be, can he swim, can he climb a cocoanut tree, can he go down a well on a rope, does he practice kshvarath (exercise). Good physical condition was the prime factor in the marriage market. Formerly the physical qualities of the men were the first consideration. Now first attention tends to be to academic degrees and to wealth. Surashtras did not marry outside the community in the olden days, nor do they at present. "The father of the girl looks for education in his future son-in-law. The mother wants only wealth. The relations want good family, a

good lineage, a good name, freedom from physical or social stigma, a family with a good reputation for sex morality, a family which pays its debts and does not live beyond its means, and a family whose members do not lose their temper or quarrel (quarreling is very bad in a joint family). The girl wants a fine looking, beautiful man."

In the old days people retired at eight o'clock at night and rose at four. Ninety-nine per cent of the weaving was done by men, but the women did much of the auxiliary work; most of it was done in open and well-ventilated rooms, below the looms of their husbands or on the verandas adjacent to the weavers' looms. The weaving was vigorous exercise.

Surashtra mothers nursed and raised their own children, and did not use nurses or servants. The children slept much. The mothers were inclined to overfeed them. Child discipline was strict, but almost never by physical punishment. Admonition and personal influence were relied on. For a mother even to strike a child with a fan would be frowned upon. The father was adored. The son would not sit in the presence of the father. The mother exercised control. The father was lenient.

As to the community tradition and history, the father would tell his son what his father had told him. The son would ask questions. A Surashtra saying runs, "You should treat your son like a king until he is five years old, afterwards like a pupil for ten years, and after sixteen as a friend."

In the old time the boys attended the "Pial" (veranda) school. They paid 4 to 8 annas per month (an anna is about 2 cents), and supplied oil for the lamps. Eighty to one hundred boys would attend such a school. The floor of the school was covered with sand from the river bed. (The broad sandy bed of the river is nearly dry except for a few months in the year). Each boy would make a bag of his loincloth, fill it with sand and carry it on his head. Each child carrying a load would provide the sand covering for the floor. The sand would begin to smell and would be changed once a fortnight. The children sat on palm leaves on the floor. Until recently girls did not go to school.

Before 1900, the people lived in joint families, with 15 to 30 persons in a joint family, made up of six to eight sub-families. They never went further than cousins. There were 60 to 70 important families, each made up of a number of sub-families. As time went on and living space for the family was reduced, sub-families were formed in adjacent places. Even when they scattered they considered themselves members of the same family. Each family had its head, who was an elder accepted by mutual consent. The family followed the father's line of descent. The eldest living member of the sub-family became its head. The head of the main family was chosen only by age. Whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory, the head of the family had

to be tolerated. The heads of sub-families did not meet for family councils. After 1900 sub-families with only one father became "joint families," and families are becoming progressively smaller.

The Surashtas were all of one caste, so that division of labor did not exist among them to the extent that it did among other Hindu groups. In the old days, and up to 1892 or 1894, the community had its caste tribunals. When an offense had been committed the caste man would give an order for everyone to stop weaving. Temple servants would go to the houses and mark the work of each loom, to insure that no work would be done until the hearing of the case had been completed. If anyone should weave in the meantime he must ask forgiveness and pay a fine. Each main family would send a representative—an upright man—to sit in the caste court. There would be 60 or 70 in the court.

The offender would be called before the court. In 99 per cent of the cases the offender would admit the facts. Since everyone was familiar with what happened in the community there was little chance to deceive. It was not customary to arrive at the decision of the court by voting. Someone would propose a fine, if that was a suitable form of punishment. The presiding officer would say to the assembled court, "Do you approve?" If the proposal seemed to express the sense of the meeting the presiding officer would make an announcement to that effect. "The community decision was final as a privy council judgment." In one instance where the decision did not conform to the community's sense of fairness there was a rift in the community for a few years until the case was taken up again and the fine which had been imposed was refunded.

In the old days the community was not well organized but did its work unostentatiously, and corrected the errors of the few miscreants who offended against the unwritten laws of the community. Before 1896 the caste tribunal, which consisted of 60 or 70 elders, met once in a decade or so, when there was real necessity for settling caste disputes and questions. They sat on a mat or carpet spread on the floor, and there was no regular method for conducting meetings. After 1896 benches and chairs were provided for the caste tribunal. The caste tribunal itself was registered under Sec. 26 of the Indian Companies Act, as a body for promoting religion, education, commerce and other charities, etc., with the permission and under the seal of one of the secretaries of the Government of Madras. Frequent meetings were held. A permanent president was appointed for a period of three years, and he had a council of 100 elders appointed to help him in solving the knotty problems of the community. There was no community government besides the caste court. There were no community organizations other than those described. In the old days when the British courts were not function-

ing the Surashtras settled their disputes by referring them to the caste tribunal. After the advent of the British courts the Surashtras slowly resorted to the British civil courts.

The laws or standards of the community were not written down. They were familiar to everyone. Some of the offenses were:

To drink intoxicants.

Non-payment of the charity tax of one pice per rupee—less than one per cent.

False accounting of income(true and faithful accounting was usual).

Enticing a married woman by entertaining her. Adultery was rare. Such a case was seldom seen in court. It would be handled "in camera" to prevent the ruin of the family.

Murder cases were unknown. The only case my aged informant could recall was that of a man who, in a fit of anger, struck his wife with a piece of wood, injuring her so that she died. He was banished for life.

Civil cases, such as breach of contract, were rare and were not heard by the caste court. Usually they were concerned with misunderstandings or differences of interpretation, rather than with explicit deceit or wrongdoing. When such an issue would arise it would be heard by the "street elders"—that is, by ten or fifteen of the family heads residing on that street. These meetings were held occasionally and informally. There was no occasion for the "street tribunal" to be recognized as part of the city government.

There is no relation between the community government and the provisional government of Madras or the Madura city government. The individual community members pay their "mahimai" (community taxes or assessments) directly to the Surashtra Sabha, which has now succeeded the caste tribunal. The government collects its taxes, revenue, municipal income, sales tax, etc., from individuals, and these taxes have nothing to do with the community government.

No public figures "worth mentioning" have arisen among the Surashtras. There are similar Surashtra communities in Dindegul and Trichinopoly. Their history differs in no way from that of the Surashtras of Madura. In Firaneloveli District there are three Surashtra villages, namely, Pudukkottai, Vilankudi, and Vivavanalhur; in South Arcot District, Thirubhuvanum, and in Tanjore District, Thiruvudimarhur and Arnmayappan.

REVIEWS

Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility, by Clyde V. Kiser and P. K. Whelpton, article in *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2 (April 1949).

Differential Birthrates in Michigan, by J. Allan Beegle (Michigan State College Agricultural Experiment Station, Special Bulletin 346, Section of Sociology and Anthropology, February 1948).

The Surashtras: A Self-Sustaining City Population, by Arthur E. Morgan, article in this issue of *Community Service News*.

Migration and Education, by Edmund de S. Brunner, Frank Lorimer, and Floyd Dotson, article in *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (November 1947).

The slow race suicide of urban life is a disaster comparable in its seriousness to the quick suicide of modern war. Each demoralizes the entire population, each destroys the chance of a better future. To large cities the cream of the population is attracted by wages and opportunities, and there they die out progressively from generation to generation. The deeply spent and demoralized rural community that results from prolonged emigration of its abler members is most difficult to improve, and impossible to improve as long as this selective emigration continues. Yet our rural communities will produce most of our future population.

Recognizing the seriousness of the race suicide of educated and urban people, we are faced with the need of understanding its cause. An intensive statistical study is being made of this by the committee on "Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility," reported by Kiser and Whelpton in the *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*. From its stated aims, its high quality of scientific objectivity, and its excellent presentation, one might expect to find exposition of the underlying factors causing the low birth rates of urban and of educated people. But from this report we learn primarily that among the people of Indianapolis the number of *specifically planned-for* children increased in proportion to the cultural and economic status of families, with the wanted but unplanned-for and the unwanted children accounting for the high birth rates of the poor and uneducated. The authors have concluded that since the decline of birth rates in Indianapolis should be accounted for by increased spread and effectiveness of contraception, low birthrates of city people must be attributed to cultural causes.

The evidence presented in this report is valuable, but the use that is made of it may be very misleading. If intellectual motives and attitudes are fundamentally responsible for low urban birth rates, which are now most

prominent among those of high social and economic status, ■ change only in values and economic arrangements might make adequate reproduction possible for educated city people. Frederick Osborn has expressed this view in saying, "Since this kind of selection is largely a result of attitudes and motivations which are derived from the social and psychological environment of the parents, it is directly subject to social control."

It seems highly unlikely that there should be a practically universal rule, both world-wide and in history, that with increasing urbanism we have a decreasing reproduction, unless that rule has some more deep-seated foundation than alterable urban motives and attitudes. Since the rate of reproduction generally decreases as the size of the city increases, it seems still more improbable that present low urban birth rates are merely a result of a spreading technique of birth control. For among those who effectively use birth control the limitation of the family probably varies with the size of the city.

May not motives and attitudes, such as desire for high standards of living, serve to conceal a more underlying reality of the population problem? Is not a high standard of living a biological as well as an economic and cultural necessity to the rapid pace of urban and professional life? If birth control were no longer available, would the same forces that now make for low birth rates of professional classes find expression, perhaps, in ■ higher rate of insanity, which is now proportionate to the size of the city? Moreover, if the economic advantages of the well-to-do were withdrawn, how then would their capacity to bear and to support children compare with that of the poor—especially those not affected by the disintegration and stress of urban industrial life?

Kiser and Whelpton's conclusion that "future research on group differences in fertility belongs to the field of social science rather than to medicine or biology" seems to be premature. Evidence that urban birth rates are falling by means of contraception may not justify such ■ conclusion.

The study of why large cities have almost universally failed to reproduce themselves, with or without the use of birth control, requires a more revealing kind of evidence. For this purpose the study of a unique city population which has effectively reproduced itself for a long period of time is of crucial importance. The case of the Surashtras of Madura, India, who have so reproduced themselves, is a milepost in this study.

The case of the Surashtras casts doubt on the prevailing belief that unsanitary conditions and practices, overcrowding, and epidemic diseases were the basic cause of the nearly universal dying out of urban families before the advent of modern sanitation where birth control was not practiced. The Surashtras were crowded, their sanitation was primitive, and they were subject to contagious diseases in a tropical climate. This suggests that

there may be an important common underlying cause of the extensive use of birth control today (as in ancient Rome) and the dying out of city populations in the past, despite their much higher birth rates.

The case of the Surashtras shows that "rurality" is a complex regimen of life, and that a rural community can exist within a city just as an urbanized community can exist among well-to-do farmers.

The case of the Surashtras reinforces the view that there is some condition of vitality resulting from rural culture that can withstand and overcome adverse circumstances and disease and make possible adequate birth and care of children. For the Surashtras were a rural people isolated in the midst of a city. The fact that the Surashtras were able to have easy childbirth, like many other isolated rural people accustomed to a nervously conservative but physically active life, would indicate that modern medical care may be an inadequate alternative to a rural standard of vitality. The observation of the Pioneer Health Centre that fear and avoidance of having children is linked with vital inadequacy is thus supported. The fact that the Surashtra community was well integrated, isolated from "urban" influences and free from prevailing social disintegration also supports the contention of the Pioneer Health Centre that a stable birth rate of wanted children can only be achieved in a socially healthy community.

What is the essential condition for survival that is most destroyed by the large city but kept by the rural community? It is not sanitation, food, recreation, schooling, or even interest in children. Nervous exhaustion and psycho-neuro-endocrine disintegration—resulting from social disintegration—does increase in proportion to the size of the city. Nervously exhausted and frustrated parents generally cannot give adequate care to their children. Inadequate parental care results in inferior children, inferiority progressively developing from generation to generation. Nervous exhaustion may cause educated people to avoid having more children than they can manage, while the poor have children they cannot manage.

Probably the most significant inquiry that has been made about the role of nervous energies in life is the physical fitness studies of Dr. W. R. P. Emerson. Dr. Emerson was able to demonstrate the great sensitivity of the weight of underweight children to nervous activity and environment, and with the weight, the health and vitality. A school examination would result in a certain average loss in weight, a visit to a dentist resulted in a greater loss, a weekend of mountain climbing resulted in gain, a weekend of social life resulted in a loss, and so on. Children of the well-to-do are more generally underweight than those of the poor. As a result of prolonged studies of such relationships between activities and health, Dr. Emerson was able to

construct a kind of standard regimen of life in which there would be an optimum product of health, and furthermore he was able to prove the soundness of his approach by widespread practical application in greatly reducing disease and death rates. It is significant that the Surashtras had a similar regimen of life.

The vital processes of pregnancy, childbirth, child care, and family and community relations generally require the same controlled and directed nervous energies as are involved in nutrition, overcoming disease, or in work and study requiring nervous energies. Since physical labor does not significantly exhaust or disrupt these nervous energies we must take into account the effect of nervously demanding urban and intellectual living on our capacity to reproduce.

The relation between the regimen of life and birth rates is significantly clarified by a recent development in medical thought. In the January 1949 *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* Dr. H. D. Kruse points out that medical theory had assumed that nutrition was a simple result either of dietary or of non-dietary factors, but he goes on to show that it is instead a complex product of numberless, variable and compensating factors such as living conditions, climate, heredity, and so on. A poorer quality of food may enforce idleness, and a high rate of nervous expenditure may enforce other compensating adjustments such as change in diet and—we suggest—having fewer children. It is this new view of man, as a united dynamic resultant of numberless interacting factors, that has yet to make itself significantly felt in population theory. The fact that the “economy” of a human personality and community may instinctively adjust itself to changed circumstances as by having more or fewer children should direct attention to the nature of the forces that create this compensating action.

A valuable report on *Differential Birth Rates in Michigan*, by J. Allan Beegle, throws some more light on the crucial influence of “urbanism” upon birth rates. Professor Beegle writes: “The size of family is related very closely to rurality. One is able to predict with startling accuracy, for example, what the birth rate will be if it is known whether a group lives in a large city or in a remote agricultural area.”

Mr. Beegle’s study gives an interesting clue to the essential characteristic of urbanism as it affects birth rates. He points out that the highest correlation with lowered birth rates was the use of electric lights. It is possible that the use of electric lights emancipates man from a kind of naturally enforced conservation of nervous energies. Perhaps it is no accident that the Surashtras had an early enforced time of retirement—eight o’clock.

Another important area of controversy centers on the contention that rural areas, the source of future population, are not indeed being deeply im-

poverished of their human resources. This objection is best answered by intimate comparison between the more hopeless communities that have been most subject to long exploitation, as in the case of many in the Atlantic states, and the far higher proportion of vital communities in less exploited areas of Utah or Kansas.

That rural areas lose to the city a disproportionate number of their college-educated youth is demonstrated in a study of rural-urban and urban-rural migration by Edmund de S. Brunner, Frank Lorimer and Floyd Dotson, in their article, "Migration and Education."

This article is an analysis of the United States Census volumes entitled *Internal Migration in the United States, 1935-1940*, from the standpoint of educational status measured by years of completed schooling. We quote from this report:

"The census report on *Social Characteristics of Migrants*, in addition to the data covering all ages and types, gives special attention to those who were from 25 to 34 years of age at the time of the 1940 enumeration. This group would obviously have been 20 to 29 years of age in 1935, at the beginning of the period measured. . . . This group, hereafter called the youth group . . . in all of the states . . . is highly migratory. . . .

"Because this age group included the best educated of all migrants, attention is focused on them. In terms of the total migration of these individuals between 25 and 34 years of age, regardless of destination, it is clear that the better educated have a larger proportion of migrants than any others. . . .

"The next question is concerned with the destination of these migrants, first of all with reference to the broad categories urban, rural non-farm, and farm. Regardless of the amount of education, the urban migrants tended to move to other cities between 1935 and 1940, rather than to rural territory. . . . The better educated these urban twenty-five- to thirty-four-year-olds were, the more likely they were to select another city. Whereas in terms of the entire population most migrants moved to the type of territory they had left (that is, urban to urban, farm to farm), among both rural categories the better educated moved to the cities in higher proportions than to farms or villages. Only among the less well-educated farm population did a majority of these young adults stay in farm territory. . . .

"For every two people who left the farm for the city, one city person went back to the land. . . .

"While well over 180,000 rural persons 25 to 34 years of age (and far more older people) with less than a full high school education moved to the cities, along with 125,000 with college training or graduation, the cities sent to the farms alone 110,000 persons with less than high school graduation and only about one fifth as many with college training as they received.

The result of this exchange in population in the five-year period under discussion was therefore a net lowering in the educational status of the farm population.

"Farming, and to some extent rural non-farm populations, have even more right to be concerned about the quality of the migrants they receive from the city than the city has to be alarmed over the quality of the rural migrants. After all, with the cities the balance is on the plus side. ...

"Large proportions of poorly educated migrants fail as farmers, although they may subsist as farm laborers. They are the first to 'go to the wall' when there is a recession in farm prices. The idea held by some that the relief problem of the cities in the 1930's could be solved 'by sending the unemployed to the land where they could raise their own food' was completely fallacious. Scores of studies by state colleges of agriculture and the rural research unit of the WPA proved this. Moreover, these urban migrants, because of their low capital resources, gravitate to the poorer land, often marginal or worse. The type of farming operations carried on by these poorly educated urban migrants presents a social and economic hazard. These ill-prepared farmers are not competent, for instance, to safeguard their soil adequately from wind and water erosion, and land thus unprotected often becomes a menace to adjoining farms. ...

"With minor variations, the general pattern shows the majority of migrants to rural farm areas to have 7 and 8 years of grade school education. The [migrants to], rural non-farm [communities] vary; in some states the majority have 7 and 8 years of grade school, in some 1 to 3 years of high school, in others 4 years of high school. ...

"[Recent] data, based on a sampling study, indicate little general change in the character of the migration. The pattern, where measured, was similar to that summarized in the beginning of this article."

The cultural decline and sterility of rural communities from which the abler people have left is described in the following account by Paul and Betty Keene of Penns Creek, Pennsylvania. They came to Penns Creek four years ago, feeling that the rural community was their challenge and responsibility.

Anyone with social pioneering, missionary inclinations need not seek in India or the Kentucky mountains for fulfillment. Here on the edge of the Pennsylvania mountains, in a beautiful countryside, one finds shocking intellectual, cultural and spiritual poverty. As the more enlightened people moved out, the general level of the community fell.

Our local people are of sturdy, hard-working, scrupulously clean, honest, unimaginative, very conservative stock. They accept gladly some modern

technical advances, but the more vocal members seem to resist wholeheartedly any social advances. They are ingrown, ridden with petty jealousies and misunderstandings, and of narrow vision. Family life has broken down.

But many of them feel that there is something larger than themselves and their town. They sincerely long to do something about it, but leadership is lacking and they don't know which way to turn.

PECKHAM AND THE ROYAL COMMISSION

Royal Commission on Population. His Majesty's Stationery Office. London. Price 4/6. (In view of the importance of this penetrating report, *Peckham*, organ of the Pioneer Health Centre, has devoted most of its August issue to reviews of its considerations and findings. The following is a brief condensation of this review.)

Set up because of public alarm at the falling birth rate, the Royal Commission on Population has found it necessary to inquire into the structure and function of the family, and into the nature of the family's relation to its environment.

The report's main conclusion includes the following significant statement: "A community like ours, in which birth control is generally accepted, can only prosper or, in the long run, survive, if its members think it worth while to have families large enough to replace themselves."

What might cause potential parents to think it worth while to have children? In order to study this, Dr. Pearse, in the evidence she was asked to place before the Commission, stated: "The Peckham Experiment has indicated that the limitation of families is part of a complex picture of which the physical inadequacy of the individual and the disintegration of his social environment are outstanding features."

The Commission hopes that by increasing both existing economic measures and social palliatives, the unsatisfactory condition of the family in modern life may be sufficiently improved; but our experience shows that no negative attitude of relief, or alleviation of "burdens," will strike to the root of the matter. Only a positive attitude leading to the cultivation of the social soil in which the family can flourish, will bring about revitalization of family life.

The finding we would particularly stress is that the first years in the young married couple's life together are as crucial to family development as are the first years of childhood to the development of the individual. In Dr. Pearse's words: "We find that the nature of the social soil upon which the young people fall at the time of marriage is of paramount importance. In modern urban conditions the soil is in an advanced state of erosion."

The highly unsatisfactory position of the mother of a family in modern society, has been revealed by the penetrating inquiries of the Royal Commission. It has been cited as one of the most important causes of a low birth rate.

The terrible social isolation and continuous intorned preoccupation—described in the Report as the lot of the average mother—has long been vividly illustrated for us by the stories member families tell us of their pre-Centre lives.

The first baby has too often been born into this isolation. Its coming seems further to cut the mother off from the few relationships she has maintained. The mother is tied to the child. Her adult interests are sacrificed. Her husband loses her companionship. Small wonder that out of their mutual dissatisfaction in parenthood they often resolve to have no more children.

The Commission suggests that this situation can be relieved by day nurseries, part and full time, residential nurseries for emergencies, sitters-in, school camps for holidays and so on, emphasizing the need for the *relief* of parents by taking away the children for special or regular periods.

As palliatives, these measures will not solve the problem. But, once the true function of women is understood, it will be clear that the mother's difficulties are not so much due to the burdens of her life as to its restrictions.

We have been able to see what happens to the young family when it has opportunities for the cultivation of its faculties within a community. Parenthood becomes not a time of frustration and misery but of growth and fulfillment.

We have tried to show that to remove her children from the mother, to separate her further and further from them by handing so many of her responsibilities to others, is not the answer. She must find in urban life, not the lost farmyard or village green, but some corresponding sphere which, like the farmyard, is an extension of her home.

The integration of services intended to operate on the family's behalf can only realise their intention in so far as they do in fact sustain the family's vitality. It has fallen to the Peckham Experiment to emphasize that the remedy of the results of lack of vitality is not the same as the cultivation of vitality itself. This distinction may still appear to many to be unreal. But wide experience gained at Peckham serves only to emphasize its great significance. Growth and development (of which fertility and population figures are an aspect) are the expression of an inner vitality. If we intend to encourage that vitality, we must inquire into its mode of operation and the conditions which favor it.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC STABILITY

Southern Illinois, by the Executive Committee of Southern Illinois (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1949, illustrated, 193 large pages, cloth \$3.00, paper \$2.00).

The decline and disintegration of the local community is a fairly inevitable product of prevailing economic forces. It is taking place irrespective of the industrial development or of the politics of society.

Despite the spread of welfare services to compensate for the wholesale disruption of society, communities generally continue to disintegrate at an increasing pace. Specialist services are being supplied to communities in nearly all fields of life by an ever greater variety of agencies and organizations; but by and large they are only expensive delaying actions often so ill-conceived as to hasten bankruptcy and demoralizing dependence on the state. Specialists increasingly employed to give back to the community its organization, recreation, education, mental health and religion are generally impotent, for they too share the disintegration of society and are powerless to recreate the spirit of autonomous fellowship which is the prerequisite of community life.

The extent to which the predicament of the community is basically economic is inadequately recognized. Moreover, it is assumed that the economic forces destroying the community are beyond community control or are essentially parts of a promising and advancing modern technology.

The effect of our economic system on the community is described in a remarkable regional study entitled *Southern Illinois, Resources and Potentials of the Sixteen Southernmost Counties*. According to this book, Southern Illinois contains most of the requisites for a high level, largely self-contained economy. There is nearly everything needed from ample supplies of oil, coal, gas, cotton, lumber, nearby iron, a highly developed transportation system and diversified agriculture, to ample money and people. But this area, even more than most others in America, has failed to benefit from its own wealth. It has suffered chronic unemployment throughout the past thirty years.

Southern Illinois, Incorporated, has been told of in past issues of *Community Service News* as well as in the report of the small community conference elsewhere in this issue of the *News*. The book *Southern Illinois* is an important tool, an essential part of the regional development of Southern Illinois. Its scope is wide, including chapters on geography, history, government, population trends, labor, agriculture, resources, business and industry. Twenty-seven authors contributed to the volume and it is well illus-

trated. It is both a penetrating study of the conditions and problems that exist and a study of what should be done. This book is far more significant than most regional studies because it is an outgrowth of a very significant regional development rather than of academic study.

The approach of this book to the problems of Southern Illinois naturally takes for granted most of the conventional and prevailing economic conditions and patterns of action. The principal criticism that may be made of this approach is that the region may be unnecessarily limited and frustrated by the economic conditions it takes for granted.

When Southern Illinois finds oil, the oil is sold to national producers by landowners who move to Florida with its income, and automatic pumps do the work. It does not convert its lumber into its own furniture because it is dominated by national suppliers. It fails to invest its money in local enterprise because it has no assurance that local people will adequately patronize local enterprise. Whether people spend or invest their money, whenever they part with it, it is progressively drained out of the area to accumulate in metropolitan banks unavailable for local use. The national economy wants less of Southern Illinois than Southern Illinois, being geared to the national economy, wants of the nation. Just as America has recently drastically cut its purchases from England, so is it cutting its purchases from many of its own regions.

A community, region, or association of regions does not have to lie at the mercy of an anachronistic national economy. It can have a vigorous life of its own fully supplementing its trade with the rest of the nation. But if it is to have such a life, measures must be taken to insure an adequate degree of vigor and autonomy for its own local economy. During the past thirty years a sufficient number of experiments have been made to give assurance that such a community and regional economy may be so successful in increasing both local and outside trade that its greatest danger lies in the bitter antagonism of vested interests that lose their power in consequence of it.

The most dynamic and successful exchanges have been those employing a non-hoardable money such as was described in the past two issues of *Community Service News*. Another method of achieving a regional economy is one operating with headquarters at DeGraff, Ohio, the Stride Exchange System.

A *Dayton Daily News* feature article thus describes the Stride System:

"Ivan Firth, regional chairman of the Second Federal Reserve district and member of the SES administrative committee, revealed details of the Stride Exchange at a meeting of the DeGraff Chamber of Commerce a few months ago.

"The system enables members to trade one with the other, up to the

limit of debit or credit recorded to each, without money, except for the necessary functions performed by money in the system,' he asserted.

"The agreed value of each transaction is entered in a central accounting system, on the clearinghouse principle. The system does not replace money, any more than do the clearinghouses long used by the banks and stock exchanges. But it does avoid needless monetary transfers, thereby allowing banks to have the use of depositors' funds for longer more dependable periods of time.'

"Stride Exchange System proponents hold that the twin bottlenecks to peace and prosperity are finance and distribution. The function of the Stride Exchange System, they explain, is to break these two bottlenecks by meeting the challenge of 'mis-distribution' and lowering the hurdles of finance.

"Founded twenty years ago during the depression, Stride was built upon the basis of reciprocal credit.

"We started where the banks left off,' said Stride president C. C. Wood. 'We combined the system with traditional American business methods to fit any type of business or service.'

"The first transaction was between a carpenter on relief and a New York bakery. The carpenter repaired the bakery's windows at the prevailing wage rate, thereby accumulating credit equivalent to his service.

"Emphasizing that the system as now perfected is not a barter arrangement, Wood noted the SES founders had developed an exchange which uses money only incidentally.

"With reference to the DeGraff project the SES president said: 'Like some nations, DeGraff cannot manufacture more than a fraction of all the things it needs. It should, therefore, sell as much outside the community as it buys from other places. This is expedited whenever a DeGraff concern opens a Stride Exchange account.'

The regional or community exchange economy can give the economic community a balanced budget in relation to the rest of the world. Insofar as the community does not have sufficient outside income to purchase what it needs from outside the community, it can achieve full employment and benefit from its manpower and resources in serving its own needs. But a community or region cannot supply its own needs so long as it depends in its own local or regional economy on the national currency which is hoarded and drained out of the community to the point of economic exhaustion. National advertising, cutthroat competition by nation-wide firms, and lower prices of mass produced products have power to destroy the local economy so long as they have the power to drain off its medium of exchange.

The autonomous local and regional economy and associations of such economies thus have it within their power to strike at the heart of perhaps

the most pressing problem of our time without dependence upon the national government. For it is the worldwide consequence of these economic forces that has most created class strife, urbanism and international war.

Walter Gormley, an engineer, has defined a dynamic aspect of the worldwide economic problem with unusual clarity in his periodical *Small Industry*, published in Mount Vernon, Iowa. He writes:

"In the past, mass production methods have thrown people out of work who have then gone to work in producing new mass production machinery which has thrown more men out of work who have gone to work producing new mass production machinery, etc. This merry-go-round has had to go ever faster as more and more men had to be employed in the production of mass production facilities in order to keep employed the men thrown out of work by mass production methods.

"The operation of our economic system has been analogous to Hercules' battle with the Hydra. Every time we destroyed unemployment by putting the unemployed to work in building new mass production industries, we have created additional unemployment [and insecurity of firms not up-to-date in their mass production methods]. As long as new mass production facilities were built at an ever increasing rate great enough to absorb the unemployed, we were not aware that our monster was sprouting two new heads every time one was knocked off.

"The dizzying race between the ever decreasing employment in the consumer goods industries and the ever increasing employment in the capital goods industries was lost in the crash in 1929. There has not been full employment since then without pump priming by the government. Even now with the government throwing money right and left for arming half the world to the teeth, for rebuilding what was destroyed during the war, for relief of people in war torn countries and for bureaucratic spending here at home, the government pump priming is not enough to maintain prosperity.

"Prospects for the future look hopeless, and it is hopeless if business and industry do not wake up. There are probably a number of ways out, but just to sit back and hope things will improve will not work. To ask the government to 'do something' seems to lead to some form of state control, as in Russia.

"I think the best way lies in small industries and in small community and group cooperative action. The initiative should come from fellows like you and me, not from the government.

"Hercules had to change his tactics. He burned the mortal heads off the monster, instead of knocking them off, and buried the immortal head under

a huge rock. We also need to change our tactics in the battle against the monster of unemployment."

The dizzy sequence Mr. Gormley describes is a consequence of the fact that the savings obtained by modern industrial methods, as by primitive slavery, are hoardable and are only invested in risk-free securities or for an excessively high interest. Building soil, reforestation, housing, competition with big business and small community benefit are shunned by those investors, and wages and incomes are kept too low to permit adequate employment in producing consumer goods.

How could a taxed exchange money create community prosperity? People would continue to save, but they could not, as heretofore, save in the form of *money*. Money thereby becomes a medium of constant exchange. Savings then are forced into very active competition for available fields of investment, causing a drastic decline in interest rates. Land values come to be greatly augmented, as do the values of forest and natural resources, resulting in their conservation. Money is now immune from the depreciation and risks of all other types of investment, with a result that people want to liquidate other forms of property in favor of bank deposits. They liquidate our natural resources and our human resources in exchange for the indebtedness of the American people that is represented by bonds and money.

To be able to hoard money is like making our bridges preferred parking places, making passage across them so difficult that high tolls become inevitable. If railroads did not charge for the time during which freight cars were held by people who received or sent goods in them, there would be a similar impossible result of freight cars coming to be used for storage and for living quarters. They would indeed become scarce, and those who had railroad cars would be reluctant to part with them except for a high fee. Scarcity of money arises from similar causes. It is this artificial scarcity of money in comparison with labor and goods, despite unexampled amounts of unused money reserves, that forces the rural community into bankruptcy, the efficient small industry to sell out to the big industry that can finance itself and control the limited market, and the small farmer into the ranks of the migrant laborer.

So clear-cut is this problem of the region and community that understanding of it can lead to its mastery, if not in one way, then in another. And with mastery of this crucial aspect of the communities' destiny, the community becomes better master of the multitude of subsidiary problems it now has had to palm off onto the state and other outside agencies.

COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SURVIVAL

Report of the Sixth Annual Conference on the Small Community
Yellow Springs, Ohio, July 29-31, 1949

Subject: Economic and Social Conditions for the Survival of
Healthy Communities

About forty people—workers in professional lines which converge on community, and concerned laymen who face acute problems in their own communities—met for three days on the campus of Antioch College for an interesting exchange of ideas out of their experiences. They had in common a serious pursuit of truth regarding the questions which they felt needed to be answered.

This Sixth Annual Conference on the Small Community distinguished itself by the general participation of its members. There was a high degree of common purpose and effort which held to the goal set for the conference by its announced topic.

Panel discussion, and small-group methods were used almost throughout. While it was agreed, in the final evaluation meeting, that better adaptation of method to subject can be achieved; there was common agreement that the conference has started on the way to greater significance and usefulness.

"What are the problems we come with?" was the first question raised. Of the thirty-six problems brought up, four were concerned with reaching a working agreement on what community is. This would involve agreement on the distinctions between the small and larger communities. Six were concerned with better understanding of the problems arising out of rural-urban relations. Thirteen questions had to do with the education of people for and in community. The remaining thirteen questions concerned problems of organization, leadership, balance, resources, job opportunities and barriers to community development.

Community Disintegration

Since the predominant need seemed to be to understand better what was happening to the community, the study of causes of community disintegration was taken up in the second session. At first there appeared a difference in emphasis on the geographical and the psychological aspects of community. These were resolved in the general acceptance of Baker Brownell's definition of a community as consisting of "people who know each other well in a variety of functions, as whole human beings."

It was agreed that the disintegration of the community results largely from those tendencies in modern society which make it impossible to know

most people in more than one function. In urban life, even families tend to be fragmentary rather than unified. Community is thus tending to wither away in western society. Some characteristics of this disintegration are juvenile delinquency, declining birth rate, insanity, migratory tendencies, and war. It was not felt that modern technology was necessarily a cause of the disintegration. This could rather be designed and geared to assist community processes, as in certain aspects of the TVA program.

The Endowed College and Community

The Friday afternoon panel discussion was on the theme, "What the Endowed College can do to Implement Education for Grass-Roots Democracy."

Considerable agreement was immediately possible on the nature of the problem. Endowed colleges, with some exceptions, tend to regard their function as being to supply employees for business and government, in competition with the state universities. This trend is aggravated by the students' own belief that there was no future for them in their home communities. All too often this conclusion had justification. Communities tend to be drained of both youth and wealth so that they are financially unable to support the major functions of healthy community life. The problem was to break through this vicious circle.

In suggesting answers there was at first a variety of opinions. College heads must themselves be converted, said Richard Eastman, away from the prevailing concept of training "leaders," to emphasis upon the needs and functions of communities themselves. Living must be more important than money-making. Rural jobs, as in rural churches and schools, must not be looked upon as stepping-stones leading to better jobs elsewhere. The college must regard home-building, and the necessary training for it, as a primary consideration.

In the closing moments small groups were asked to bring recommendations toward a solution of the problem. The keynote of their recommendations was the development of consciousness of community needs and values throughout the college, from administration to students. Half of the groups advocated some form of cooperative work study program geared to community service, life and employment.

Community and the Welfare State

Friday evening the conference considered the effect of the "welfare state" upon the community. The problem had been defined in advance as "the relationship between the initiative of the state and the initiative of the community."

Opposition to the "welfare state" tendency seemed unanimous. It was agreed, however, that there could be no objection to government at any

level making its primary purpose the expression of the will and serving the welfare of the people. But the question was how individuals and smaller groups could best do the things they need to do for themselves. It was felt that having more and more done for people by an impersonal state was harmful to character, community, nation, and to international unity.

The true community exists where people know each other and have some control over their mutual welfare. Attitudes are shaped in the small community which carry over into people's relation to larger groupings of mankind. In this sense only can "world community" have any reality. When the small community dies all community dies.

It was agreed that there was a difference between a government umpiring the game and a government playing the game. A small native state in India, Aundh, had achieved great benefit from its constitution which provided for the local unit, the village, to be supreme, but the state remained in an over-all relation to all such units.

The problem is how the true welfare, in terms of character, responsibility, security and well-being, can best be secured. This, the conference seemed to agree, was through a society of communities wherein people would know each other in terms of several functions. The welfare state was probably coming only because such communities were already largely destroyed. It was then questioned: if the small community does default and the "welfare state" comes, can it give welfare, or does it give disaster? Rome, it was pointed out, became a welfare state as a later measure preceding its disintegration.

Was the welfare state a cause or an effect? It was thought to be both—an effect of the withering away of men's local attachments and a cause of their still greater loss of the spirit of mutuality and interdependence.

Laymen in the Community

On Saturday morning several laymen took over for a round table on "How we do it in our town." Bard McAllister spoke of the work of the Presbyterian Board of Missions at Alpine, Tennessee, where an interdenominational larger parish is developing. The problem of his mission he reported as the difficulty of getting the people to take over as their own the various projects that had originated in the mission—the mission forest, farm and industries. Its solution, it was felt, would require care not to impose the mission's will on the community and to help the community to move in the direction of its own initiative as a community. This was, in fact, the crucial problem in the use of all leadership of "experts" from outside and the use of other outside aids and resources.

Another approach was revealed in Mr. E. B. Smith's presentation of the growth of community spirit and enterprise in Fairmont, West Virginia,

where the community itself furnished both the program and the resources from the beginning.

In Ohio River communities, Prof. E. L. Kirkpatrick said, faculty and students of Marietta College had made it a policy to go to help communities only in response to a clearly expressed desire for such cooperation.

In North Lima, Ohio, James Steer stated, the community problem was not solved. The main difficulties seemed to be the divisiveness of churches and the fact that many who lived there went elsewhere to earn their living.

In contrast was Yellow Springs. Henry Federighi, chairman of the Yellow Springs Community Council, described the philosophy and approach of the Council, and a few of the projects that had been carried out under its influence and initiative. He showed that the more needs could be fulfilled by united community action, the more awareness of needs arose among members of the community. Its philosophy was, therefore, "demand creating" as well as "demand supplying."

Joe Marx described the reluctance of his community, Loveland, Ohio, to accept benefits, such as a community center which he had largely furnished for them.

In a concluding discussion, it was agreed that the amount of work people devote to a project will in part determine the benefit to the community.

*Regional Community Organizations.**

Saturday afternoon eleven professional community service leaders reported on the state or regional community development programs with which they were associated, the areas of greatest hope, the failures, and warnings of what to avoid from their experiences in their fields.

Norman Bittermann told of the large area in Southern Illinois that was economically depressed. Southern Illinois, Inc., is making a regional approach to the solution of the problem. Here is an experiment in over-all regional planning and cooperation devoted to the general welfare—something to watch carefully in coming years.

The Adult Education Division of the Extension Service of the University of Michigan, as reported by Cynthia Jones, has been using "Area conferences on community organization for self-help" during the last two years, with considerable effectiveness in terms of concrete results such as establishment of community centers, community councils, recreational programs, etc. Representatives are sent from an area of about fifty miles radius.

In a region somewhat like Southern Illinois, the Monongahela Power company of Fairmont, West Virginia, through its "Territorial Develop-

*Fuller accounts of the following presentations have been published separately, and are available from Community Service for 50¢ a copy, mimeographed.

ment" community program, is also making a regional economic approach. E. B. Smith, director of this program, said that attempt has been made to find industries natural to the area. In the thirty-one counties additional job opportunities have been created for about 20,000 people. These and other results were achieved by forming a people's area organization called the Upper Monongahela Valley Association.

The Bureau of Community Development of the University of Wisconsin has been recruiting its staff with the idea that "the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state." The problem, said Rolland Berger, is to find common ground with the people. Self-study action programs of three types are in use and a Community Development Service Bulletin is designed to supplement them. The aim is "to spark as many long range centers of initiative as possible;" not to formalize organization, but to assist groups out of which strong, lasting organization may later evolve.

In Kalamazoo, Michigan, the Upjohn Institute for Community Research, reported on by its director, Harold Taylor, has concentrated upon planning for long-term employment and a steady and expanding level of business and industry. The focus is on Kalamazoo county. Various publications designed to report surveys, to guide employment, to assist businesses in various ways and to awaken people to all the aspects of the problem have been published.

The Ohio "Community Institutes," according to J. P. Schmidt, are reaching 100,000 rural adults through 400 meetings annually, in the state of Ohio. Community autonomy is encouraged in the selection of speakers and in the planning of these institutes, and a directory is furnished to guide communities in knowing what services are available. The emphasis is upon the everyday problems of communities.

The Bureau of Community Service of the University of Virginia Extension Division, said Margaret Snyder, grew out of the discovery that socially impoverished people in great need of help did not learn from what was available to them. "Special projects in adult education" were set up to try to meet their need. Studies made in several counties were followed by community workshops giving attention to leadership training. Stories of community accomplishments have been told in the *New Dominion Series* leaflets. Vital grass-roots community building has resulted, especially under the leadership of Jean and Jess Ogden.

With emphasis upon community self-analysis or determination of needs, the Extension Service of the University of Illinois has been striving for action on the part of community groups. Alvin T. Anderson, who had planned this procedure, said that such groups are encouraged to study their economic base, social and civic facilities and services. Success has proceeded out of natural desire for a coordinating group, the community council. A

unique feature is the place which the newspaper has had in the program because more than any other institution it gives expression to regional community of interest. This is in line with the Southern Illinois development of a centrally edited and printed regional newspaper, with special sections added for the separate towns. Some other problems which isolated towns cannot master in isolation can be mastered by them in cooperation with other towns of the area. Our hats must be off to Illinois!

The "Montana Study" was described by its director, Baker Brownell, as aimed at getting the University off the campus, in experimentation with education "within the context of the occupation and community of the people being educated."

Mr. Brownell told how the Montana Study staff went only where invited, keeping the "agency" in the background. With the primary approach through the study group there resulted a high degree of adult self-education and planning in how to live. No particular action was sought by the agency. Action groups did develop, however, as in the small village of Darby, where a standing committee on small businesses, after studying the possibilities, recommended fifteen, of which five are already operating, and employing seventy-five men not employed before. The approach was not economic but inclusive of all the life of all the people.

The last report, by James Wyker, was of the Advisory Council program of the Ohio Farm Bureau. These are study groups as with the Montana Study. An adult education in self-help, aimed at reinvigoration of society, approaches the community unitedly. As in the case of most community endeavors, the lower economic half of the farm population is largely absent from advisory council membership.

In introducing discussion, the chairman then told how in both Nova Scotia and Simcoe County, Ontario, study group programs have been developed with education as the core, in which all services of all agencies are available through these adult self-education groups in the communities. Have such programs an advantage over the Advisory Council program which is especially set up as the instrument of a single agency? It was agreed that no one approach was universally applicable. Each region and community would have to be studied to find the best approach.

National Community Service Organization

The Saturday night session discussed the many plans under way for a national organization for community service, against the background of the afternoon reports. Among these plans were those of the American Country Life Association, the National Planning Association, Community Chests and Councils, the American Council for the Community, the National Coun-

cil for Community Improvement, the committee on community of the National Education Assn., and the National Board of Home Missions.

The discussion expressed both a fear and a hope. The fear was that there is danger of setting up an ill-informed and professionally-controlled overall institutionalization that would overshadow local community initiative. The hope was that, as in the American Association for Adult Education, there is evidence of a groping after something more than the past inadequate programs. Community development, like adult education, must proceed as a movement; otherwise it may be harmful.

Margaret Snyder, speaking for Mr. Sellers of the AAAE, said, "At the Columbus meeting I was impressed by the extent to which that association came to a crisis and rebirth—recognizing that adult education is possible only in and through and by the community. It seems to me that there is a good deal of hope in that realization."

Economic Basis for Community

A Sunday morning panel discussion considered the "Economic Basis for Community Stability." Billy Goetz first pointed out the necessity of recognizing the different causes of economic instability of the community. Norman Bittermann assumed that little could be done about a general or national depression and that the community must set aside such conditions over which it had no control, preparing "buffers" to lessen their effect while concentrating on diversification of employment so that the decline in any one employment would not so completely disrupt the community as the decline in mining had disrupted Southern Illinois. The principal course of action in Mr. Bittermann's view was to diversify employment, conserve natural resources, draw in outside money, and process and manufacture raw materials before shipping them away.

Rolland Berger felt that adequate community organization to cope with the economic problems of the community was a major need for community prosperity. He also pointed out the importance of commercial life in the small community. The extent to which people have come to do their buying outside the community had not been realized in Wisconsin until a heavy snowstorm forced people to purchase goods locally. The resulting boom in local business forced this realization. The community is faced with the problem of how to get local money to stay in the community.

Griscom Morgan here raised the question whether the fundamental problem of the nation-wide depression, assumed to be beyond the control of the community, was not also at stake in maintaining adequate purchasing power in the community. Local trade exchanges have succeeded in keeping purchasing power at home and have achieved full employment and

prosperity independent of national depression. Communities disintegrate when the local economy is excessively displaced by the national economy.

It was generally agreed that monetary instability is basic in economic instability. We cannot think of one without the other. Some thought the local or regional exchange could give such stability. For when the community spends its money outside it surrenders its power to the city. Cooperative buying and selling were also mentioned as means of benefiting the community.

There was agreement that the nation is benefited by the prosperity of its communities, so that a sound degree of economic regionalism and of self-sufficiency was justified from the standpoint of the nation as well as from that of the community.

Harold Taylor summarized the understanding reached during the meeting in saying that we must not think of economics as something far removed from ourselves, but as an outgrowth of all human beings. We must feel individually responsible for existing conditions.

Religion in the Small Community

The Sunday afternoon session was devoted to a discussion on "The Small Community Challenges the Church." Griscom Morgan said that "religion and the communion which constitutes community are inseparable. Even St. Augustine recognized that the 'true religion' had existed before the church, from time immemorial. And it existed as an integral part of the community. The institutionalization of the church in theology, creeds and Sunday worship is by no means synonymous with religion."

Ernest Mills, of the Rural Life Association, speaking on the "Church in the Community," said that the church should be a force within the community, lifting people to the highest and best that can be found. Its responsibility, he said, is to the whole of life, and not merely to what is vaguely called the spiritual. The spiritual has reality only as a light to the whole life.

James Steer, teacher, said that the community challenges the church to slough off all those tendencies which divide the people in communities; also, to seek the common good for a truly religious community life.

Richard Eastman, field secretary for the Society of Friends, closed the preparatory presentation with a statement concerning community as "a stream of continuity of which we are part. When that continuity is broken the significance of life to people ceases. To deal with that continuity requires patience and forbearance."

The conference then broke up into three groups for further discussion and to bring back recommendations. One group reported that the community's greatest need is for a simple common faith which can draw different

denominations into community harmony. The second group believed the church was challenged to present "a concept of a power not ourselves, which will be acceptable to modern man," and also was challenged to overcome the division between what is sacred and what is secular.

The third group stated that the church was challenged to "draw closer to a community-centered religion and farther from a vested interest. The church is a fellowship and should draw in the dispossessed always to be found on the fringe even in the smallest community. We have succeeded better in religion individually than socially. Yet the true church is essentially social. For discovery of this true function the church needs neighborly activities as much as the community needs religion."

Conclusion. Evaluation

This conference was, many felt, significant above all in its vitality. It developed largely out of a sense of need for basic understanding. Freedom was offered to change subjects and proceed in any desired direction; yet it held fairly central the exploration of factors of community disintegration, which had been set for it.

One of the most valued aspects of the conference was the time spent between sessions and during the intermissions in spontaneous discussion, sharing of experience, and making new acquaintances. All those attending the conference had so much to contribute to each other that a large part of their needs could best be supplied in these small discussions that grew out of and were stimulated by the regular sessions. A picnic supper Saturday evening was at the School of Community Living farm. The folk dancing and singing that followed was marked by a grace and spontaneity that grew out of the intimate group spirit of the conference.

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Community Service, Inc., is an organization to promote the interests of the community as a basic social institution, concerned with the economic, recreational, educational, cultural and spiritual development of its members. Community Service was incorporated in 1940 as a non-profit organization to supply information and service for small communities and their leaders, in the belief that the decay of the American community constitutes a crisis which calls for steady and creative effort. The nation-wide interest expressed during the succeeding years has reinforced this opinion.

HIDDEN SPRINGS

Hidden Springs, Neshanic Station, N. J., is a cooperative community in central New Jersey, within driving distance of New York, Philadelphia, and Trenton. Located on a 140-acre farm, it is capable of providing practically all the food needs for the families which are here or may come.

A true community exists only if people "worship together, work together, play together." Therefore, on the third Sunday of each month a meeting for worship is held in the afternoon, to which neighbors and visitors are cordially invited. Saturdays are the days of common work, devoted either to helping the farmer or to improving the community property.

It is our belief that as such communities spring up over the land they will contribute to a life—locally, nationally, and finally internationally—which will be in the spirit "which taketh away the occasion of war." The association between the urban and rural way of life and the attempt to make city and farm economy mesh, even on a small scale, appears to us significant in these times of overurbanization. Since we are a group which includes a resident farmer as well as men who commute to their work in New York, this attempt is a real one.

Hidden Springs is the outgrowth of an experiment in cooperative gardening which was begun by five families in 1940 in Hawthorne, New Jersey. During this period interest in a permanent community was strengthened. The development of similar projects was studied and the ideas upon which we wished to build were more clearly etched. We knew that the family unit must be kept intact and that therefore we must select land which would provide sufficient building sites. We realized also that we should not become ingrown, and that we should reach out into our surrounding community and take an interest in civic affairs. We are trying to develop the present project along these lines.

The land and central buildings at Hidden Springs are owned by a corporation, which comprises the members of the group. Business is conducted on the cooperative principle of one vote per member. The corporation "operates" its property by renting it—the central living facilities to the members who use them, and the fields, barn and equipment to the farmer who operates the farm. The rents are agreed upon in common meeting and are fixed to cover only taxes, interest, amortization and operating costs plus necessary reserves. Sites for individual homes to be built by members may be leased or sold to them, with a reservation as to transfers to insure continuance of the group's mutual concerns.